

Tracking the Good Times

Leisure Education Resource for Youth Leaders



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for Youth Leaders



Designed for youth group leaders, *Tracking the Good Times* encourages young people, ages 12-15 years, to take responsibility for creating enjoyable leisure activities for themselves, through responsible decision-making and action.

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Introduction

In an increasingly complex and stressful world, young people are often forced to confront the impact of family breakdown, competitive education and work environments, global unrest, and uncertain futures. The flexible time and resources in a young person's life, and how they choose to use them, become increasingly important.

Historically, the community has supported youth-related recreation activities as a means of keeping teens busy and out of trouble. In recent years, we have learned that prevention of alcohol and drug abuse by young people is a much more complex issue than accessibility. Feeling good about themselves, having positive role models, and developing the skills and decision-making ability to handle new challenges are all critical.

Educating for leisure becomes increasingly important in meeting these needs. Learning to create and enjoy leisure opportunities allows young people to:

- develop skills which promote lifelong enjoyment of leisure
- take responsibility and make decisions about themselves
- rest, relax, and deal with stress
- socialize and build relationships
- have fun, play, and create excitement
- act upon values and needs in positive ways
- develop competence and confidence through skill building
- express themselves in a variety of ways
- see themselves as capable of assuming many roles



What is leisure education?

Leisure education is a process that provides individuals with opportunities to examine issues that influence their ability to take responsibility for making satisfying leisure choices. This process includes identifying personal values, needs, and interests; examining barriers to involvement; and developing the skills and resources required for satisfying leisure. An understanding of these concepts, coupled with opportunities to be actively involved in leisure pursuits, can help achieve a lifelong ability to create and enjoy leisure.

Why is AADAC interested in leisure education and young people?

Since 1981, AADAC has encouraged innovative prevention programs for young people, aimed toward promoting decisions that reflect responsible independence. Leisure education provides opportunities for young people to gain the skills, experience, and confidence necessary to support responsible decision-making and action.

Why is this publication designed for use by community youth groups?

Community-based youth groups encourage and practise many of the same values that leisure education promotes. *Tracking the Good Times* is designed to help youth group leaders integrate leisure education concepts into their already effective programs. Youth groups are an important setting for developing satisfying and responsible leisure choices because they provide young people with opportunities to:

- be active, involved, and participate in leisure activities
- socialize and learn the roles and responsibilities associated with being part of a group
- experience a supportive environment in which to experiment with new roles and experiences
- learn and use skills important to lifelong leisure involvement
- take increasing responsibility for decision-making and planning

How To Use This Publication

- *Tracking the Good Times* is a collection of ideas designed to help youth group leaders facilitate leisure education activities. The publication contains sample program activities, discussion notes for use by leaders, and activity worksheets.
- Although the five sections of *Tracking the Good Times* are presented sequentially, leaders are encouraged to ‘mix and match’ activities, selecting those most appropriate to the needs of their group.
- Activities have been designed primarily for young people ages 12 to 15 years. However, with minor changes, activities are easily adapted to younger and older audiences. Minimum suggested ages have been noted where appropriate.
- Many of the activities included in *Tracking the Good Times* can be easily adapted to varying settings and time periods. Consider using activity ideas in small and large group discussions during regular meetings, as part of special theme events, during camps and field trips, as ‘rainy day’ alternatives to other activities, or during bus rides. Build on the themes and objectives that your organization supports, while focusing on leisure.
- Sources of activity ideas are indicated by the designer’s name and the number of the publication noted in the resource listing on page 57.



Leaders Make A Difference

The greatest asset of any program is the people who make it work. The time, commitment, interest, and support you contribute as youth group leaders make a tremendous difference to the development of young people.

How can you support young people by encouraging Leisure Education?

- Acknowledge and communicate the value of leisure in our lives.
- Act as a role model... share your interests, activities, and enthusiasm.
- Create a comfortable, accepting, non-judgemental environment in which young people feel able to explore and discuss issues.
- Integrate leisure education concepts with the activities your group already encourages.
- Identify and acknowledge the skills and strengths of group members.
- Challenge young people to extend themselves by exploring new leisure activities or developing further skills in areas they already enjoy.
- Provide opportunities for leisure skill development through training and experience. These opportunities should allow for gradual experimentation and success wherever possible.
- Structure group leisure activities for enjoyment and learning rather than competition and comparison.
- Assist young people to transfer leisure education skills from the group situation into their individual lifestyles.
- Work with parents, teachers, government, the media, and other youth group leaders to encourage young people to develop lifelong leisure interests and skills.



Section 1 A Look At Leisure

Leisure means many different things to many people. Free time, a good feeling, a state of being, freedom from commitment,... and the list goes on. Encourage group members to think about and to discuss leisure in its broadest terms. Be sure to include a look at active/passive, traditional/non-traditional, solitary/group, and planned/spontaneous ways of enjoying leisure.

A Look At Leisure suggests ideas for introducing the topic of leisure.

Objective:

To help young people develop an understanding of leisure and the diversity of experiences people enjoy.

Activities Index:

Leisure Autographs (includes Handout 1)	10
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Leisure Autographs

Purpose: To identify leisure interests and skills within your group and get to know members better.

Source: multiple

Age: flexible

Group Size: flexible

Time: 20-30 minutes

Materials: pens, autograph sheets - Handout 1



1. Distribute Handout 1. Ask players to circulate, searching for people who have the interests or skills listed on the handout. Have them autograph the space beside the interest that applies to them.
2. The first person to fill all the autograph spaces with appropriate signatures wins.
3. Discuss the most interesting leisure pursuits you've learned about with the large group.

Option:

Encourage participants to discuss and learn more about each person's interests as they circulate, rather than creating a competition with a time limit.

Leisure Autographs

Handout 1

Find someone who...

has performed on stage

likes to watch the stars

likes listening to music

writes poetry or fiction

has a pet

has travelled outside North America

would like to produce a rock video

does volunteer work

enjoys computer games

enjoys designing and creating

enjoys a water sport

can play a musical instrument

likes to invent or fix things

has been camping during the winter

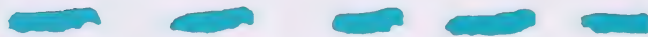
has climbed a mountain

plays a team sport

Audio-Visual Presentations



Purpose: To illustrate the variety of activities that people enjoy as leisure.
Source: multiple
Age: flexible
Group Size: flexible
Time: flexible
Materials: slide projector, screen, slides, optional: video



- Create a short slide presentation showing a variety of leisure activities. Stress balance (e.g., active/passive, structured/spontaneous) as well as a variety of age groups to promote leisure involvement as lifelong.

OR

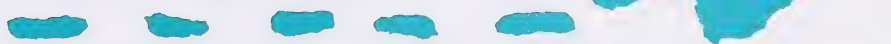
- Invite guest speakers to show slides/video tapes of leisure pursuits they are involved in (e.g., scuba diving, rock climbing, dancing, cycling).

OR

- Challenge group members to create their own simple slide presentations (small groups/pairs). They may wish to include music. Photo retailers might be approached to donate film and processing. Presentations could be used in conjunction with leisure fair (see Section 3, Checking It Out).

Leisure Alphabet

Purpose: To generate a variety of ideas about the nature of leisure.
Source: multiple
Age: 10+
Group Size: individuals/small groups
Time: 30 minutes
Materials: paper, pencils



1. Have groups or individuals write the alphabet (vertically) on the paper, leaving writing space beside each letter.
2. Ask them to identify the name of one or more leisure activities that begin with each letter of the alphabet.
3. Share and discuss the lists, stressing the diversity of things people enjoy or identify with leisure.

Option:

Complete task, as a team effort, using blackboard or large sheets of paper.



Introduce Your Neighbour

Purpose: To introduce group members and learn more about their leisure interests.
Source: multiple
Age: flexible
Group Size: maximum 30
Time: 10 minutes + 2 minutes/person

1. Have participants pair up with someone they do not know well. Have them interview each other with the intent of introducing each other to the large group later. Stress leisure interests and activities that the person enjoys or would like to try.
2. In a large group setting, provide an opportunity for each person to introduce their partner.



I Am A...

Purpose: To identify leisure interests within the group. Help group members get to know each other better.
Source: multiple
Age: 10+
Group Size: flexible
Time: preparation: 10 min.
discussion: 1-3 min./person
Materials: paper, pencils



1. Have players describe their leisure interests by writing a list of one word roles.

For example

I am a...	- skateboarder	- clarinet player
	- camper	- volunteer
	- video game player	- sun tanner
	- skier	- hockey fan

2. Collect and shuffle the papers. Read each list to the group and have them guess the identity of each person.

Option:

Complete the exercise verbally as an introduction or warm-up activity. While seated in a circle, have participants introduce themselves by stating a leisure role they assume. Repeat as time permits.

Leisure Names Introduction

Purpose: To introduce group members and begin to discuss how peoples' use of and attitude toward time varies.
Source: Pam Earle (8)
Age: flexible
Group Size: unlimited
Time: preparation: 5 min.
introductions: 15 sec/person



1. Have each member of the group introduce themselves by prefacing their name with an adjective that describes them in their leisure time. The adjective should start with the same letter as their name (e.g., Risky Ron, Creative Caitlin, Non-Stop Neal, Bored Bob).

Recreation - What Am I?

Purpose: To identify a variety of leisure interests and encourage discussion of them.

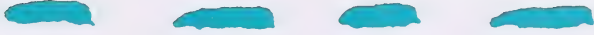
Source: Pam Earle (8)

Age: 10+

Group Size: flexible

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: paper or 3x5 cards, pins, felt pens

- 
1. Write names of leisure activities on 3"x5" cards. Pin one activity on the back of each player. Use a diverse set of activities.
 2. Have players circulate around room, asking questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no' in order to identify what leisure activity they represent. Continue until all activities have been identified.

Option:

Divide into small groups. Select a representative from each group and give them the name of a leisure activity. Group members may direct 'yes' or 'no' questions to the representative until they have guessed the activity. Repeat as time permits.

MUSIC

BUILD

TRAVEL

Leisure Charades

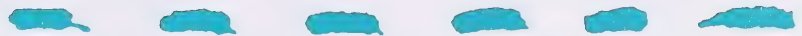
Purpose: To encourage discussion of a variety of leisure pursuits.
Source: multiple
Age: 10+
Group Size: flexible
Time: flexible



1. Follow traditional charade rules, using leisure activities as a theme.
2. Have group members contribute to the set of leisure activities to be acted out.

Leisure I.D.

Purpose: To communicate the specific leisure interests of group members.
Source: Pam Earle (8)
Age: 10+
Group Size: flexible
Time: flexible
Materials: options: felt pens, heavy paper, fabric, glue, T-shirts



1. Select a method of expressing individual leisure interests best suited to your group's skill, setting, time, and resources.
2. Challenge group members to create products (e.g., crests, banners, murals, collages, T-shirts, fence designs) that reflect their individual leisure interests. Try to use materials that may be new or challenging to them.
3. Use completed works as a basis for further discussion about the uniqueness of peoples' interests.



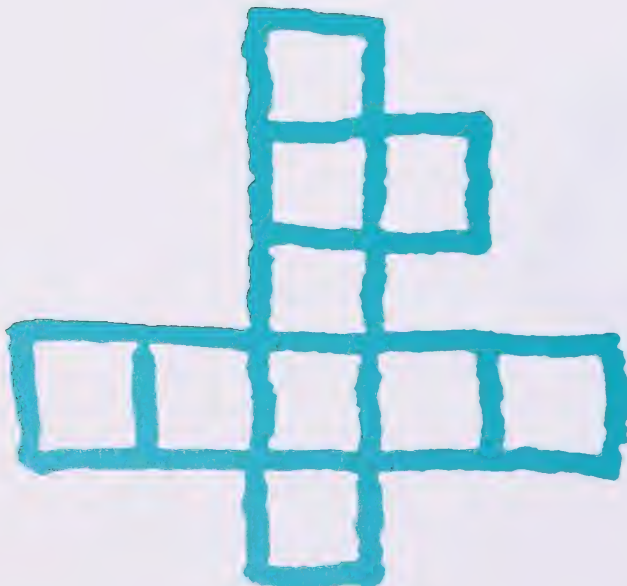
Recreation Word Search/Crossword Puzzle

Purpose: To identify a variety of leisure interests. To involve participants in a creative, challenging activity.
Age: 12+
Group Size: individuals/small groups
Time: flexible
Materials: paper, pencils



1. Challenge individuals or pairs to create word search or crossword puzzles using leisure themes.
2. Have group members exchange and solve each other's puzzles.

NOTE: This activity would be best used as an optional or 'mix and match' activity, as not all group members would have the skill or interest to complete it.



Section 2 Knowing Myself

Generating and understanding the implications of ‘self-information’ is the first step in encouraging young people to make responsible, independent, and satisfying choices for their leisure.

When young people understand their personal values and needs, and have feelings of confidence and self-worth, they are less likely to be influenced negatively by the many pressures around them.

Discussions about ‘self-information’ may be new and threatening to some young people. Adolescence is a time of curiosity and introspection. Use this curiosity to help group members further explore through sensitive discussion in a comfortable environment.

During the transition between childhood and adult life, common needs include acceptance, independence, belonging, approval, challenge/risk, fun, recognition, and positive self-image. Encourage group members to experiment with leisure interests that help them meet these needs in responsible and satisfying ways. Creating a personal journal to record some of the findings from the following activities may be a useful option for some young people.

Objective:

To develop a personal understanding of how needs, values, and influences affect our leisure choices.

Activities Index:

Great Day (Interests, Needs, Values)	22
A Look At The Past (Needs/Values)	23
What’s Important? (Needs/Values) (includes Handout 2)	24
Mood Match (Needs)	26
Good Times Auction (Values) (includes Handout 3)	27
Values Scavenger Hunt (Values)	29
Influences Inventory (Influences)	30

Great Day



- Purpose:** Often teens do not have a clear idea about what their leisure values and needs are. By considering an ideal day, participants can begin to recognize their values and priorities.
- Source:** multiple
- Age:** flexible
- Group Size:** individuals/pairs
- Time:** 15-30 minutes
- Materials:** options: journal, paper, pencils, art materials, magazines



1. Instruct the participants to think about their perfect day and record it in words or express it through a collage.

- where are you?
 - who are you with?
 - what are you doing?
 - what do you feel like?
 - what makes things special?
- Include sights, sounds, and events.

2. After they have completed the collage, paragraph, or journal entry, discuss the results.

- did people choose to do things alone or with others?
- was the activity outdoors, indoors, active, or quiet?
- did they imagine any new activities they would like to try?
- would they need to learn some new skills to really experience the Great Day?

3. Discuss how their Great Day reflects their values, interests, and needs.

Option:

Ask individuals to share their Great Day experience with a partner or with the group, if they wish.

A Look At the Past

Purpose: To identify satisfying leisure experiences and how they can meet needs/create benefits.
Source: multiple
Age: 12+
Group Size: pairs/small groups
Time: 30-45 minutes
Materials: optional: paper, pencils, journal



1. Ask group members to recall five leisure-related experiences in their past that have been important to them.

For example:

- trip to Expo with school in grade 7
- learning to rebuild the motor in Mom's car
- volunteering as junior leader at camp
- winning the basketball tournament in Jasper
- staying with grandparents for the summer

2. Have them think about and discuss why the experiences were satisfying or met their needs.

Option:

Use paper (or journal) and pencil if group discussion is not appropriate.

What's Important?

Purpose: When teens are able to identify the benefits of different leisure pursuits and the needs that these activities meet, they can begin to decide which benefits are most important to them.

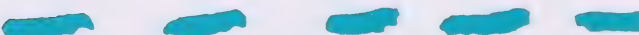
Source: Woodburn/Cherry (20)

Age: 12+

Group Size: individuals/pairs

Time: 15-30 minutes

Materials: What's Important checklist - Handout 2, pencils



1. Provide group members with What's Important? Handout 2 checklist and ask them to mark the issues in the list that are important to them.
2. Have members list their five most important items (needs) and consider how they currently use their leisure time to meet those needs.

For example:

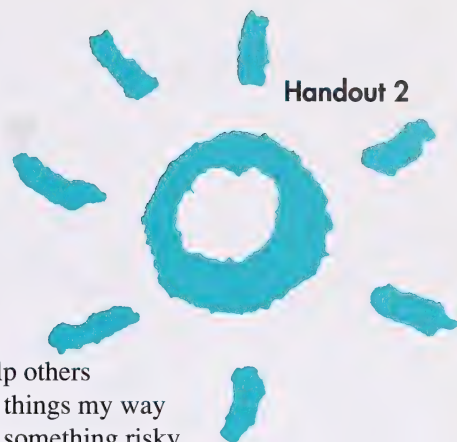
- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| - to develop friends | joined school ski club and 4H club |
| - to get recognition | performed in theatre productions at school, ran for Student Union grade rep |
| - to organize and get things going | volunteered to organize dances and other social events, planned winter camp for Venturers |
| - to relax | played video games, walked the dog, listened to music |

Option:

Discuss findings in large group. Emphasize ideas for meeting needs through leisure activities.

What's Important?

Handout 2



Mark the following items that are important to you:

- ☐ to do things with my friends
- ☐ to compete with myself; to get better
- ☐ to be physically active
- ☐ to be popular
- ☐ to laugh and enjoy
- ☐ to have others pay attention to me
- ☐ to be outdoors
- ☐ to do something different from school
- ☐ to keep busy
- ☐ to learn more about myself

- ☐ to help others
- ☐ to do things my way
- ☐ to do something risky
- ☐ to be creative
- ☐ to be with my family
- ☐ to take it easy
- ☐ to try new things
- ☐ to belong to a group
- ☐ to be good at what I do
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

List your five most important needs.

Describe how you use leisure activities to meet each need.

My needs

What I do in my leisure time to meet that need

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Mood Match

Purpose:	To identify personal needs and feelings and practise finding leisure activities that positively deal with them.
Source:	Neil Hzkowitz (8)
Age:	11+
Group Size:	individuals/small groups
Time:	30 minutes
Materials:	print community recreation leisure materials, newspapers, brochures, etc.



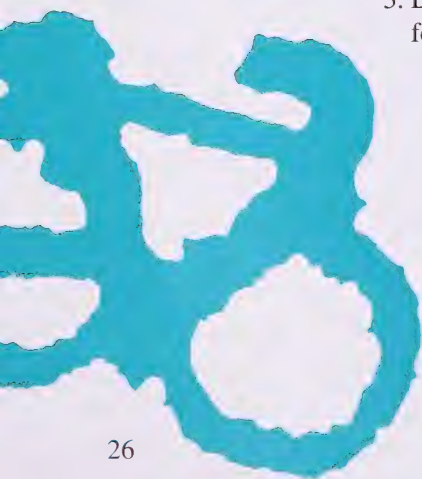
1. Assign each person or small group a period of time (e.g., Friday evening) and a mood (e.g., happy, sad, frustrated, anxious, tired, stressed).
2. Have them brainstorm recreation activities that might meet their needs or alleviate their feelings. Using the resource materials you have provided (e.g., local newspapers, posters, brochures, directories, etc.), ask them to find specific ways in which to implement the activity.

For example:

Person 'A' is feeling anxious about an upcoming competition. It is Tuesday evening, 7 pm. What could he do?

- jog or bicycle to clear his mind and release tension
- go to a concert or visit friends to relax
- watch a hockey game or movie to get his mind off his problem

3. Discuss how and why the activity would help them deal with their feelings positively.



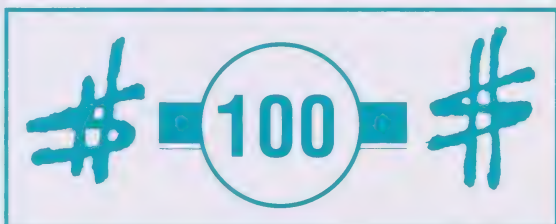
Good Times Auction

Purpose: To clarify values related to leisure.
Source: Southern Illinois University (8)
Age: 10+
Group Size: large group preferable
Time: 30-45 minutes
Materials: auction items (cards), leisure bucks - Handout 3

1. Create a number of 'auctionable' items by printing or illustrating interesting experiences or possessions on cards (large enough to be seen from a distance). Items should relate to the age and interests of the group (e.g., a hockey lesson from a famous player, a cabin by a remote mountain lake, three months of uncommitted time, a motorcycle, to dance in a ballet).
2. Distribute equal amounts of 'leisure bucks' (Handout 3) to each participant. Assign an auctioneer (should be someone with a flair for performing!). Review how an auction operates.
3. Auction the items to the highest bidders. You may choose to allow group bids rather than purchases by individuals only. This option encourages team work and organizational skills.
4. When all the items are sold, discuss why individuals wanted the items and how their values affected their choices.

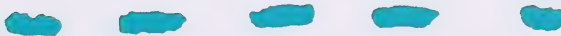
Leisure Bucks

Handout 3



Values Scavenger Hunt

- Purpose:** To increase understanding of personal values and how they are expressed through leisure choices.
- Source:** adapted from Personalizing Education: Values Clarification (8)
- Age:** 12+
- Group Size:** maximum 30 individuals/small groups
- Time:** 1 hour to one week
- Materials:** lists of values, optional: magazines, newspapers, etc.



1. Present small groups (or individuals) with a list of ten or more value words or phrases.
For example:
 - friendship
 - peace/tranquility
 - risk/challenge
 - beauty
 - helping others
 - creativity
 - physical activity
 - competitiveness
 - freedom/independence
 - relaxation
2. Ask participants to identify leisure activities that reflect each of these values by using words, photos, magazine clippings, or objects.
(Choose one method.)
For example:
 - relaxation
 - peace/tranquility
 - helping others
 - competitiveness
 - or.....suntanning
 - or.....hiking
 - or.....volunteering at the daycare centre
 - or.....soccer
3. The first group (or individual) to complete the challenge within the designated time wins.
4. As a large group, share and discuss one item from each person's list.
Emphasize the different ways that people express values through their leisure.

Option:

You may wish to make the activity non-competitive and extend it over the week between your meetings to enhance the quality of ideas expressed.

Influences Inventory

Purpose: To examine the attitudes and people who influence our leisure choices.
Source: Wendy MacDonald (18)
Age: 11+
Group Size: flexible
Time: flexible

Many influences are directed at teens regarding the use of their leisure time. They are pressured by family and friends to act and achieve in particular ways. The media and their peers present certain roles and images. School, work, and other obligations demand time. To examine these issues:

Discuss the influences and pressures group members experience regarding how they use their leisure time. Some possible questions are:

- does advertising influence what people do in their spare time?
- what sorts of things do families expect teens to do in their spare time?
- is there a certain recreation activity you would like to do, but are embarrassed to try because most girls (boys) don't do it (e.g., boys in ballet, girls in hockey)?
- do you have to be involved in certain leisure activities to be part of the group?
- who/what influences you the most in your leisure activities?

Section 3 Checking It Out

The opportunity to explore and experiment with a wide variety of interests greatly enhances our ability to make satisfying leisure choices throughout our lives. Young people often need help to find ways to sample activities. As a leader, you can help by introducing community resources and activities that allow young people to research and test ideas and interests.

Objective:

To provide opportunities for young people to explore and experience a wide variety of leisure interests.

Activities:

Adapt the following ideas to best meet the needs of your group.

- **Discuss** ways of finding out about leisure opportunities in your community. Challenge the group to **research sources of ongoing information** rather than providing the information to them.
- **Use the many leisure-related activities that your group is already involved** in as a foundation for informally discussing the concepts in this publication.
- **Provide time at each meeting** for individuals to talk about enjoyable leisure experiences they've had during the week and **to report on upcoming recreation events** in the community that might interest other group members.
- **Create a series of large collage posters** based on various leisure themes in your community (e.g., outdoor fun, volunteering, cultural activities, social events). Include pictures, facility names, words that describe why people might enjoy the activity, and other sources of information. Use local newspapers, course calendars, attraction brochures, magazines, and so forth as raw materials. Arrange to have the posters displayed at a local library, school, or community centre.
- Suggest that group members (or small groups) **plan a leisure activity** related to their interests and invite the rest of the group to participate.
- **Invite guest resource people** to your meetings to talk about their leisure interests. Have them include a related activity that members can try.



- Have group members **produce a brochure** of 100 inexpensive/free recreation activities, of interest to teens, that are available in your community. Distribute copies for group members. If donation/sponsorship of photocopying can be secured, distribute the brochure to other groups/facilities where teens meet.
- Have the group **organize a community Leisure Fair** that includes displays, speakers, and activities to try, related to a wide range of leisure pursuits. Invite other teens and groups of young people to participate. The event would introduce new interests, provide opportunities to actually try new recreation activities, and increase the special event planning skills of the group.
- **Create a challenge** for individual group members over a designated period of time (e.g., summer holidays), based on their choice of leisure activities, which meets the criteria you or the group have defined.

For example:

to choose and try three activities that...

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| - you can do alone | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| - involve physical fitness | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| - require you to learn a new skill | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| - involve helping others | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| - require you to be creative | _____ | _____ | _____ |

- Work with other youth group leaders in your community to **create a 'Passport to Fun'** for use by the young people in your groups. The passport would be similar to a coupon book, offering incentives for trying a variety of activities. Approach local community facilities, clubs, businesses, and service organizations for support and sponsorship. The passport might be designed so that teens retain information about each facility or service for future reference. Discounts, a 'two for one' offer, or other incentives, in which teens are responsible for some of the cost of the activity, may be preferable to 'free' privileges if a fee is normally involved (adapted from City of Regina (23)).



For example:

- skating pass
- fitness class
- swim pass
- movie pass
- weight training pass
- canoe lesson
- theatre pass
- library card
- concert pass
- kayaking lesson
- ski rental/lesson
- Youth Hostel membership
- scuba/snorkel lessons
- golf lesson or game
- plant clippings/greenhouse
- crafts - lesson or studio time
- hockey game admission
- museum/historic site pass
- windsurfing lesson
- racquet sports court booking
- building/hobby supplies discount
- modelling workshop
- restaurant discount
- volunteer centre interview

- **Plan a residential or day camp based on a leisure education theme.** Provide opportunities for sampling a wide variety of recreation activities, as well as time for small group activities and discussion related to values, needs, interests, decision-making, action planning, and barriers to involvement in satisfying leisure activities.





Section 4 Things Get In My Way

Young people often perceive barriers that prevent them from enjoying their leisure. Many are real; others can be overcome; some are out of their control.

Some barriers may be difficult to discuss in a group setting. Emphasize strategies for realistically overcoming obstacles.

Consider the following common barriers and examine attitudes toward them.

- **Lack of time** - due to work, school, or other commitments.
- **Lack of motivation** - often associated with inactive peers, or lack of energy and self-discipline.
- **Lack of information** - about opportunities, resources, and benefits related to leisure.
- **Lack of access** - due to financial, geographic, or physical restrictions.
- **Lack of skills/confidence** - may be related to recreation activity skills, social skills, or feelings of competence
- **Fear of failure/success.**
- **Inadequate facilities/community resources.**
- **Sex Role Stereotypes** - often discourages young people from trying non-traditional leisure pursuits.
- **Non-Messages** - no role models or demonstrated values regarding leisure through family environment.
- **Safety Issues** - overprotection from physical/emotional risks. Discourages trying new challenges.
- **Cultural/Religious Values/Interests** - work ethic very dominant. Leisure interests seen as frivolous, self-indulgent, undisciplined, or immoral.
- **Peer Pressure.**
- **Overimposed Structure** - overstructuring time, expectations, demands, discipline, and so forth thus limiting freedom and independent decision-making.

Objective:

To identify barriers that prevent people from enjoying leisure and consider ways of overcoming them.

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Overcoming Obstacles

Purpose: To identify barriers that prevent satisfying leisure and consider ways of dealing with obstacles within our control.
Source: adapted from Woodburn/Cherry (20)
Age: 12+
Group Size: individuals/pairs
Time: 45 minutes
Materials: Overcoming Obstacles checklist - Handout 4, pencils



1. In a large group, introduce the subject of barriers and how they can prevent involvement in leisure activities. Discuss the difference between obstacles within our control and those that are external.
2. Have group members complete Overcoming Obstacles checklist Handout 4 and discuss in pairs.
3. Allow time for large group discussion of ways to overcome barriers. What happens when barriers are out of our control?



Overcoming Obstacles

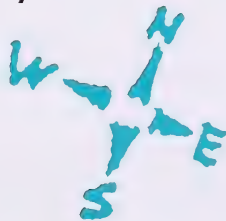
Handout 4

Beside each item, write the number that best describes how big a problem it is to you:

1. no problem

2. sometimes prevents me from enjoying myself

3. big obstacle - always gets in my way



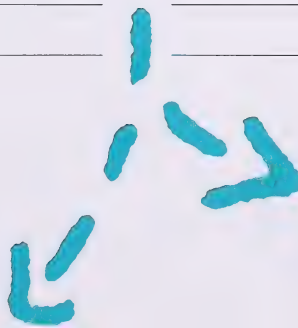
- ___ I don't feel like doing anything
- ___ I don't have enough money to get involved
- ___ homework takes up most of my spare time
- ___ there are no/few recreation facilities in my community
- ___ I don't have any creative or artistic skills
- ___ I don't know how to get involved
- ___ I can't make up my mind about how to spend my time
- ___ I never follow through on the plans I make
- ___ I might get hurt
- ___ my job takes up my free time
- ___ I don't know what to do or what I enjoy
- ___ I don't have any physical/sports skills
- ___ I don't like learning new things
- ___ I probably wouldn't be good at new activities
- ___ I have no one to do things with
- ___ my family plans my time for me
- ___ I have a disability that limits me
- ___ my friends would make fun of me

List your major obstacles (ratings 2 and 3).

Circle items that you have control over and identify ways of overcoming them.

Obstacles

What could I do about them?



I Can't Do It Because...

Purpose: To identify common obstacles that prevent involvement in leisure activities and begin to identify solutions to those barriers.

Source: Wendy MacDonald/K. Ross (18)

Age: 11+

Group Size: maximum 30

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: paper, pencils



1. Divide the group into two teams:

Team A - Have each member write on a piece of paper one leisure activity they would personally like to try. Put the slips in a container.

Team B - Have each member write on a piece of paper one common obstacle to getting involved with a leisure activity. Put the slips in another container.

2. Randomly select an activity and an obstacle from each container.

For example:

- activity: go skiing
- obstacle: no money

3. Have each team separately brainstorm as many solutions as they can in three minutes. Have one member record all solutions. Compare to see which team has the most solutions.

4. Repeat the process until all obstacles have been discussed and then summarize the exercise. Indicate how quickly people can find solutions to the barriers to leisure activities if they're motivated, that there are many solutions to obstacles, and how creative the solutions can be.



If I Couldn't, I Would...

Purpose: To assist group members in reviewing the benefits of having a variety of leisure interests, and considering alternatives when favourite pursuits are not possible.

Source: Wendy MacDonald (18)

Age: 11+

Group Size: individuals/large group

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: If I Couldn't, I Would... - Handout 5, pencils



1. Discuss balance in life and the need for a variety of leisure interests that meet different needs.
2. Have group members consider ways of meeting their needs through leisure activities if the circumstances in their life changed. Use If I Couldn't, I Would... Handout 5 as a guide.
3. Provide an opportunity to share ideas in the large group.

Option:

To introduce this concept, invite a panel of guests to talk about how they have adapted their leisure interests to meet new lifestyles and needs.

For example:

- a physically disabled person
- someone new to your community
- a professional athlete (newly retired)
- someone on a limited income
- someone who has reduced time/energy due to work stress

If I Couldn't, I Would...

Handout 5

Often we find a leisure activity that is special to us and helps fill our needs. Because the activity is so enjoyable, we focus our interests upon it and forget about developing other leisure pursuits. When circumstances change and we are unable to continue our favourite activity, we become unhappy. By planning ahead and understanding what made the activity special, we can find new interests that are equally rewarding.

Complete the following statements about leisure activities.

I like _____
because _____
_____.

If I was injured or disabled and couldn't continue, _____
_____ might give me the same good feelings.

I enjoy _____
because _____
_____.

If I couldn't afford to buy the equipment involved or pay to use the facilities, I could _____
_____ and still have a good time.

With my friends, I like to _____
If I moved and left my friends behind, I could _____
_____ and still be happy.

In the summer, I like to _____
but in the winter, when I can't continue, I could _____
_____ and get the same enjoyment from it.

Alone But Not Lonely

Purpose: To identify the many ways of enjoying leisure alone, without feeling lonely.
Source: Wendy MacDonald (18)
Age: 10+
Group Size: flexible
Time: flexible

Young people often confuse the feeling of loneliness with spending time alone. Some people feel the sadness and isolation of loneliness even within a group. Discuss the differences between loneliness and spending time alone.

Discuss the importance of 'alone' time in our lives (e.g., time to relax, to daydream, to think, to plan, to create, to rehearse, to have fun).

As a large group, brainstorm as many solitary leisure pursuits as possible. Ask each group member to contribute to the list until you have exhausted all ideas (e.g., star gazing, walking, dreaming, writing letters, suntanning, walking the dog, reading, washing the car, watching clouds and sunsets, window shopping).

Joining In

Purpose: To identify leisure interests and roles that allow people to be part of a group.
Source: Wendy MacDonald (18)
Age: 12+
Group Size: flexible
Time: flexible

Not everyone is an athlete. Not everyone is a performer. Young people often need help to identify the skills and interests they have that would assist them in being part of a group.

Lack of self-confidence, social skills, material resources, or geographic/physical access can be extreme barriers to leisure enjoyment. Choosing a leisure activity and building a role within it, which helps us enjoy ourselves and meets our needs in comfort, can be an important transition in overcoming the obstacle of joining in.

1. As a large group, brainstorm different ways that participants could be involved in school sports (e.g., playing, coaching, timekeeping, scheduling, cheerleading, making posters, managing equipment, sports reporting).
2. Identify other leisure activities and discuss ways of enjoying each.
For example:
 - music
 - drama
 - dance
 - rodeo
 - kayaking
 - computers

Section 5 Taking Action

Acting upon our plans and hopes is often the most difficult part of achieving satisfying leisure. Without action, we fail to move past the preparation stage of creating enjoyable leisure experiences. We miss the opportunity for learning and testing skills, gaining confidence, and having fun. Discussion is not a substitute for actively experiencing leisure.

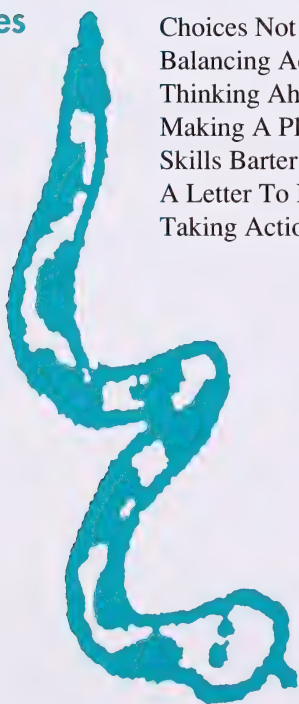
Encourage members to gain the skills, confidence, and support systems necessary to sustain their plans. You may wish to refer to Section 3, Checking It Out for additional ideas about encouraging action.

Objective:

To examine methods of making decisions about leisure, to explore issues that affect our choices, and to practise skills for putting plans into action.

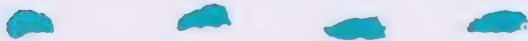
Activities Index:

Choices Not Chances (Decision-Making) (includes Handout 6)	44
Balancing Act (Planning) (includes Handout 7)	47
Thinking Ahead (Planning)	49
Making A Plan (Planning) (includes Handout 8)	51
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Choices Not Chances

Purpose: To practise using a simple decision-making process related to leisure activities.
Source: Wendy MacDonald (18)
Age: 12+
Group Size: individuals/large group
Time: 45-60 minutes
Materials: Choices Not Chances - Handout 6, pencils



1. Lead a discussion about how people make choices or decisions in life. Ask the group to give examples (e.g., flip a coin, do what others are doing, weigh pros and cons, wait and see what happens). Discuss the merits of each method.
2. Introduce decision-making model (Handout 6 Part I). Use an example to illustrate that we all have choices about leisure, if we choose to make them.
3. As a large group, brainstorm things to consider when making decisions about leisure choices (e.g., time, cost, equipment).
4. Distribute Choices Not Chances Handout 6 Part II. Have participants complete it individually or in small groups, using a situation appropriate to them.

Effort/energy
Is the activity worth the effort required?

Equipment/materials
What equipment do I need?

Choices Not Chances

Handout 6 Part I

What's the problem?

What is the decision that needs to be made? Is it one choice or is it a series of problems to tackle? Is it a decision you can make yourself?

Who can help?

What people or information could help you make your decision?

What are my choices?

Think about all the alternatives you have for solving the problem or making a choice.

What are the consequences?

Consider the advantages and disadvantages of each of your choices. How would each choice affect you or others?

Making A Choice

Make a decision. Can you take responsibility for it whether the consequences are good or bad? Do you feel good about your choice?

Designing A Plan

Create a detailed plan. When and how will you put it into action?

Trying It Out

Plans are useless without action. Trying out your decision is sometimes the toughest part of the plan. Be proud of your effort to take a risk.

Checking It Out

How did things go? How did your decision affect you or others? Would you make the same decision again? Why or why not?

Transportation/location
Are facilities accessible? How would I get there?

Influences
What would others think about my choice? Does it matter?

Money
How much does it cost? Where would I get the money?

Skills/interests
Do I have the skills (or can I develop them) and the interest to bother getting involved?

Time
When does the activity occur? Do I have enough time to be involved?

Support
Who needs to support my choice in order for it to work?

Choices Not Chances

Handout 6 Part II

Making Decisions

1. What's the problem? _____

2. Who can help? _____

3. What are my choices? _____

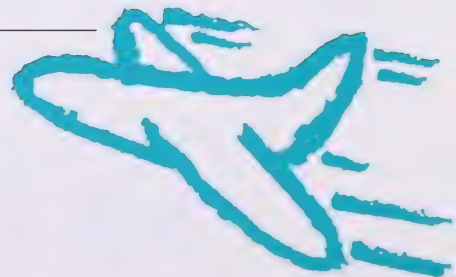
4. What are the consequences? _____

5. Making A Choice _____

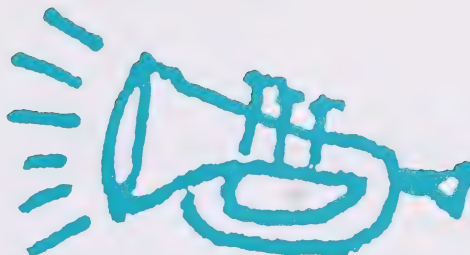
6. Designing A Plan _____

7. Trying It Out _____

8. Checking It Out _____



The Balancing Act



- Purpose:** To examine the need for balance in selecting leisure activities, and explore how that balance can be achieved.
- Source:** Wendy MacDonald (18)
- Age:** 11+
- Group Size:** individuals/large group
- Time:** 30 minutes
- Materials:** Balancing Act - Handout 7, pencils



1. Distribute The Balancing Act Handout 7 and read through the introduction. Discuss examples of extremes in leisure activities shown on each pair of phrases.
For example
 - all active sports (hockey, water polo, running, motocross, skiing)
 - interests that do not involve others (running, watching TV, reading, video games)
 - all interests dependent on money (horseback riding, movies, skiing, travel)
2. Ask the participants to identify which extremes describe them. Have them use the worksheet to identify what they could do to bring a balance to their leisure activities.
3. Discuss the risks of being out of balance. Have the participants identify other extremes and suggest ways to bring a balance to the examples they give.

The Balancing Act

Handout 7

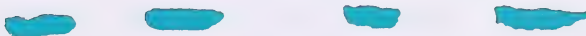
Some people go all out. They don't do things halfway. These extremes may put their lives a little off balance. However, looking at extremes sometimes helps to reach a balance. Circle the phrase in each pair that best describes your leisure interests. What could you do to reach a balance?

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Spending time alone | VS Doing things with other people |
| I could _____ | OR I could _____ |
| 2. Enjoying activities that cost a lot | VS Doing things that don't cost anything |
| I could _____ | OR I could _____ |
| 3. Physical activities like sports | VS Passive activities like reading |
| I could _____ | OR I could _____ |
| 4. Having interests that depend on specific facilities and equipment | VS Having interests that do not require special equipment or facilities |
| I could _____ | OR I could _____ |
| 5. Developing interests that are seasonal | VS Having varied interests all year round |
| I could _____ | OR I could _____ |
| 6. Enjoying activities that require lots of planning | VS Doing things spontaneously |
| I could _____ | OR I could _____ |



Thinking Ahead

Purpose:	To examine the advantages and disadvantages of planning for leisure.
Source:	Wendy MacDonald (18)
Age:	11+
Group Size:	flexible large group/small groups
Time:	30 minutes



Young people often complain that they are bored. They do not always associate planning with having opportunities for fun. Emphasize that both planned and 'spur of the moment' activities can be fun.

1. Discuss the following in a large group:

Have you ever had an afternoon when you didn't know what to do? Sometimes it's fun not knowing what you are going to do. Other times it's boring or frustrating. Time, energy, and money are often wasted. Although you don't have to plan for everything you do, a plan is sometimes useful.

Remember a time when you, your family, or group wanted to do something special and planned ahead.

- what was the experience?
- was it a success?
- what were the benefits in planning ahead?
- what were the drawbacks in having to plan?

2. In small groups, brainstorm as many solutions to the following situation as possible:

It's Friday night and you want to enjoy the evening with a group of friends. What activities could you and your friends do?

Activities that could be done
spontaneously (without
previous planning)

Activities that would
require planning

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



Making A Plan

Purpose:	To practise using a simple planning model related to leisure activities.
Source:	Wendy MacDonald (18)
Age:	12+
Group Size:	flexible individuals/small groups/pairs
Time:	depends on complexity of activity goal
Materials:	Making a Plan - Handout 8, pencils



Although all leisure activities do not require a detailed plan, long-range or complex leisure goals are more manageable for young people when broken into steps.

1. Brainstorm a list of individual or group activities that might require developing a plan.

For example:

- planning a camping or cycling trip
- organizing a dance
- learning to scuba dive

2. Using the planning model presented on Making a Plan Handout 8, work through the process as a large group. Use real activities of special interest to your group, where possible.
3. After completing the example in a large group, challenge individuals, pairs, or small groups to plan a leisure activity that they would like to try, by using the Making A Plan Handout 8.

Making A Plan

Handout 8

Many leisure activities require careful planning to be successful. Think about something you would like to do and design a plan of action.

1. Set a goal...

What do you want to do?
What are you aiming at?
What's the most you expect?
What's the least you'll be happy with?

2. List what is involved

What do you need to do to get what you want?
What do you have to find out or do to carry out your plan?
Who and what are involved?

3. Establish priorities

What steps are most important?
Which activities are essential to getting what you want?
(Mark them with an asterisk.)
Which steps are less important?

4. Create a timeline

When does it have to be done?
(Number the asterisked items in the order in which they must be done.)
Sometimes it helps to write items on separate pieces of paper so that you can rearrange the order if you need to.

5. Check It Out

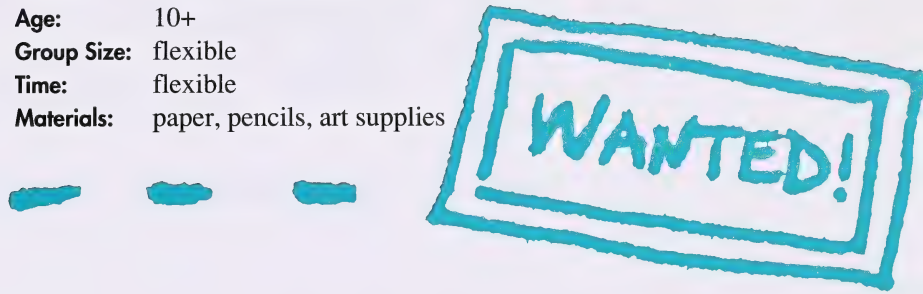
What could go wrong?
What problems might arise?
How could you handle them?

6. Try It Out

Did you have fun?
What worked well?
What would you do differently?
How would you adjust your plan for next time?

Skills Barter - Let's Make A Deal

Purpose: To match individuals who can teach recreation activity skills with those who wish to explore a new leisure interest.
Source: Wendy MacDonald (18)
Age: 10+
Group Size: flexible
Time: flexible
Materials: paper, pencils, art supplies



1. Have each group member create a 'Wanted Poster' or write a description outlining the leisure experience they would like to learn about.

AND

Have each group member create an advertisement or poster promoting the leisure activity they could teach.

*Each group member should be willing to explore one new interest themselves and introduce one of their current interests to someone else.

2. Circulate or post the advertisements and posters so that participants can find a resource person to match their interest.

Option:

Include outside resource people (e.g., family members, friends) to expand the pool of leisure resources available.

Also see Section 3, Checking It Out for other ideas related to community recreation resources.

A Letter To Myself

Purpose: To help group members follow through on plans they have made.
Source: multiple
Age: flexible
Group Size: flexible
Time: 15 minutes
Materials: paper, pens, envelopes, stamps



1. Have each group member write a letter to themselves outlining actions they wish to undertake in relation to their leisure. Suggest that they include a timeline, obstacles that could get in the way, resources to seek out, and so forth.

For example:

- improve fitness level
- learn to ski
- join a dance class
- spend more time with friends

2. After they have signed the letters and sealed them in self-addressed envelopes, gather the letters and retain for future use.
3. Mail the letters to the group members at a later date, as a reminder of their plans. This activity works particularly well over a long period of not meeting as a group (e.g., summer holidays).

Option:

Have the group design a contract (individually or as a group) related to making leisure commitments for the future. Have each group member complete and sign the document for use by themselves or a supportive friend.

Taking Action As A Group

Purpose:	To help young people take responsibility and create changes in their communities, which relate to leisure opportunities.
Source:	Wendy MacDonald (18)
Age:	14+
Group Size:	flexible
Time:	flexible

We often blame our community for a lack of leisure opportunities, rather than helping to develop new activity options.

Teens do not always understand the steps needed to create a leisure facility or leisure opportunities. This exercise helps the participants to identify leisure problems for their age group, and examine possible alternatives, available resources, and the steps required to create change in their community.

1. Have the group brainstorm leisure problems they often experience.

For example:

- no place to dance and enjoy music on weekend evenings
- high cost of equipment for sports activities
- no central registry of teen volunteer opportunities

2. Divide into smaller groups and challenge members to think as community recreation planners.

As community planners, the small group could:

- assume anything is possible and list possible alternatives
- choose several attainable solutions and decide upon steps of action
- identify people, information, and funding resources that could be helpful
- get verbal or written commitment from members of the group to put the plan into action
- contact people in the community who could provide information or support to research the ideas

3. After the groups have discussed their ideas, have them report back to the group. Have the large group select a feasible project goal. Invite resource people to speak to the entire group, in order to identify resources for developing leisure opportunities.
4. Be prepared to suggest community resources that groups might use to assist them in their action plan.

For example:

- individuals who have coaching skills
- service clubs and other organizations that might provide leadership or funds to establish activities
- municipal or provincial departments that may provide guidelines or funds
- recreation department personnel who may provide leadership or funds

Consider inviting an external resource person who could provide ongoing leadership and support to the group or help them develop practical plans to initiate activities.

Resources

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22. Yeiles-Brennis, Margo, and Rabinovitz, Toby, *A Time For Teens*, Alberta Recreation & Parks (Recreation Development Division), Edmonton, 1985.
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24. *Kids & Careers*, Career Services Branch, Alberta Manpower, Edmonton, Alberta, 1982.

If you require further information/activity ideas related to young people in the following interest areas, please refer to the resources listed on pages 57 and 58.

Leisure Education - Concepts & Activities

Resource # 3, 8, 9, 10, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23

Interpersonal Skills

Resource # 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Decision-Making/Planning

Resource # 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24

Needs, Values, Interests

Resource # 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24

Teen Development/Characteristics

Resource # 4, 22, 24

Self-Esteem

Resource # 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 14, 15, 16, 24

Teaching, Leading, Learning - Program Design

Resource # 1, 2, 3, 7, 22

For a complete listing of other AADAC resources related to young people, contact your local AADAC office, or:

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